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ABSTRACT

Chapter I/Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) served students at 78 high schools in New York City, supplementing tax-levy-funded ESL classes in those schools serving limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. Chapter I of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act funded ESL and bilingual classes, bilingual guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals. Three program models were provided, each for a different type of high school, with specific formulas for allocation of funds at different instructional levels. Evaluation was conducted through interviews, data collection, and observation. Each participating school had diverse problems requiring different Chapter I programs, including native language illiteracy, increases in the number of immigrant students unprepared for the high school curriculum, social and economic difficulties facing new immigrant students, and large classes. In some cases, the constant influx of new students made functional grouping impossible, placing students at diverse ESL levels in the same class. Recommendations for program improvement include: examining effects of new LEP eligibility rules on demand for Chapter I funds to supplement tax levies, evaluating effects of class size on ESL learning; and exploring the effectiveness of the program model as it relates to student acquisition of English language skills and time needed to mainstream. (Author/MSE)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAMMING IN CHAPTER I ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (E.S.L.) PROGRAMS 1988-89

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EVALUATION SECTION
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February 1990

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAMMING IN CHAPTER I ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (E.S.L.) PROGRAMS 1988-89

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ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAMMING IN CHAPTER I
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
1988-89

SUMMARY

- The Chapter I E.S.L. program was fully implemented. During the 1988-89 school year, it supplemented tax levy-funded E.S.L. classes in high schools serving Limited English Proficient students.

Chapter I/Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (P.C.E.N.) programs in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) served students at 78 high schools. Chapter I/P.C.E.N. programs supplemented tax levy-funded E.S.L. classes in those high schools serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Scores below the twenty-first percentile on the English version of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) designated students as being LEP. All LEP students were eligible to participate in several programs.

Chapter I of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act (E.C.I.A.) funded E.S.L. and bilingual classes, bilingual guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals. The Division of High Schools (D.H.S.) provided three program models, each for a different type of high school, with specific formula for the allocation of funds at different levels of instruction.

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) obtained its descriptive data by interviewing the project director, resource specialists, principals, assistant principals, and coordinators, and by observing classes. A field consultant visited four participating high schools: Eastern District, John F. Kennedy, Edward R. Murrow and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Each of the participating schools had diverse problems requiring different Chapter I programs. Problems included native language illiteracy, a growing number of immigrant students unprepared for the high school curriculum because of erratic education prior to immigration, various social and economic difficulties facing new immigrant students, and large class sizes. In some cases the constant influx of new students made it impossible to group students functionally, and students at diverse levels of English proficiency were in the same E.S.L. class.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Examine the effects of the new LEP eligibility rules on the demand for Chapter I funds to supplement tax-levy monies for E.S.L.

- Evaluate the effects of class size on E.S.L. learning and consider reducing class size if the study indicates that this would be prudent.

- Explore effectiveness of program model as it relates to student acquisition of English language skills and time needed to mainstream.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of English as a Second Language programs funded by Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (P.C.E.N.) and Chapter I of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act (E.C.I.A.). Student outcome data can be found in OREA's High School Evaluation Unit's final evaluation report, while this narrative provides a description of a sample of the school-based utilization of the Chapter I/P.C.E.N. funds.

HISTORY OF PROGRAM

The Board of Education's Division of High Schools (D.H.S.) has stipulated that all LEP students be scheduled for a tax levy-funded E.S.L. class and at least one additional Chapter I/P.C.E.N.-funded E.S.L. class. Chapter I is a federally funded program, while P.C.E.N. is funded by the state. The Chapter I/P.C.E.N. E.S.L. program was designated to supplement tax-levy funded E.S.L. classes in high schools serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Students are classified as LEP if they score below the twenty-first percentile on the English version of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB).*

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*The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of non-native speakers of English in order to determine whether their level of English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to participate effectively in classes taught in English. Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the LAB are entitled to bilingual and E.S.L. services.

SETTING

At some schools, as much as 50 percent of the population in the neighboring area were recent immigrants, frequently settling only temporarily. This created a constant influx of new arrivals and turnover at some schools. The newly arrived students in some areas were much less academically prepared than their predecessors had been, or even illiterate in their native language. In other schools, native language illiteracy was rare. Some schools were located in economically depressed and socially unstable areas, while others were in middle class, stable areas. None of these descriptors held for all schools; each was unique.

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

In 1988-89, LEP students were those who scored below the twenty-first percentile on the English version of the LAB. All LEP students were eligible for funded E.S.L. classes.

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Chapter I/P.C.E.N. delivered E.S.L. services according to one of three models. The first model (Model A1) was designated for academic comprehensive high schools and optionally for alternative high schools. It specified three class periods per day of E.S.L. at the beginning level, and two of each at the intermediate and advanced levels. Tax-levy funds paid for one of the daily E.S.L. periods. Class registers were to be between 15 and 20. All Chapter I-funded classes were to include a paraprofessional as an assistant.

The second model (Model A2) was designated for academic comprehensive high schools with occupational clusters, total education option high schools, and optionally for alternative high schools. It specified three class periods per day of E.S.L. at the beginning level and two at the intermediate and advanced levels. This model acknowledged the limitations of a seven- or eight-period school day and allowed LEP students the opportunity to take advantage of the equal access to special programs afforded them by the new bilingual cluster programs.

The third model (Model B) was for vocational schools and optionally for alternative high schools. It required one period per day of E.S.L., funded by tax-levy and supplementary P.C.E.N. allocations, but not Chapter I funds.

REPORT FORMAT

This report is organized as follows: Chapter II describes the evaluation methodology; Chapter III describes the programs at a sample of schools and some typical classes; Chapter IV offers conclusions and recommendations based upon the findings of the evaluation.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This evaluation assessed program implementation. Evaluation questions included the following:

- Did LEP students in Chapter I E.S.L. classes function at similar skill levels in the English language?
- Were any instructional formats more conducive to the rapid learning of English than others?
- How did schools address the issue of native language illiteracy?
- Did LEP students from all backgrounds and at all program sites experience the same kinds of difficulties?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Sample

An OREA field consultant interviewed the project director; resource specialists who regularly visited the schools and were supervised by the D.H.S.; and school-based administrators including E.S.L. coordinators, assistant principals of foreign languages, and principals at four high schools: Eastern District, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Edward R. Murrow. The consultant also observed a total of six classes at these schools.

Instruments

The field consultant used OREA-developed interview and observation schedules.

Data Collection

An OREA representative conducted interviews and made field observations during the spring of 1989.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The program provided E.S.L. instruction. The field consultant observed six E.S.L. classes at four sites: Eastern District, Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Edward R. Murrow High Schools.

Eastern District High School

At Eastern District High School, the field consultant observed a beginning level ninth grade Chapter I E.S.L. class of 27 students. The teacher, assisted by a paraprofessional, directed students to read a "fill-in-the-blank" type exercise aloud. Some students volunteered readily and repeatedly, while others were unable to answer when called upon. Another part of the lesson, aimed at developing vocabulary and listening skills, required students to act out a situation for which they improvised dialogue. The situations dealt with such questions as "Where do you live?", "How do you get home from school?", and "When do you do your homework?" It was obvious that there was a disparity in the level at which students could speak and understand English. The teacher said that this was partly due to students entering the class mid-semester.

John F. Kennedy High School

At John F. Kennedy High School, the consultant visited an intermediate E.S.L. class of 15 students. The teacher led a lively discussion in which students compared the political

regimes in their native countries. The class discussed an article the students had already read comparing drug and alcohol addiction. Another animated discussion ensued, much of it based on the personal experiences of the students.

The consultant also observed an advanced E.S.L. class that was studying figures of speech. The teacher explained what an abstraction was and asked the students to explain the differences between a metaphor, a simile, and personification. The homework assignment required students to give examples of each figure of speech and justify their use as illustrations of the category. To prepare students for the assignment, which involved using reference books in the school library, the teacher reviewed the use of such reference books as the encyclopedia and almanac.

Martin Luther King, Jr., High School

At Martin Luther King, Jr., High School, the OREA evaluation consultant observed an intermediate level class in which the teacher conducted a grammar lesson based on regular verb changes in the past tense.

The consultant also observed a beginning level class that conducted a two-contestant spelling bee with an imaginary $1,000 award. The class applauded for each correctly spelled word, and a scorekeeper kept track of the words. When a contestant misspelled a word, the scorekeeper volunteered the correct spelling and wrote it above the misspelled word. The teacher then directed students to read the words aloud, and the students discussed what they would have done with the $1,000 jackpot if

they had won it. The teacher built a grammar lesson around the words in the spelling bee focusing on the present progressive, simple past, and simple present tenses.

Edward R. Murrow High School

At Edward R. Murrow High School the consultant observed an intermediate E.S.L. class of 30 students. For the first five minutes of the class the students wrote in their journals, a regular part of the class routine. Students then wrote on a "free theme." The class discussed the characters and plot of a story and broke into groups of four or five to continue discussing the story and to complete exercises. Each group had a leader who kept a log of group discussions and reported to the class, a responsibility that rotated weekly among the students. The teacher circulated among the groups to see that everyone participated. A paraprofessional facilitated the group work, collected and checked homework, and distributed and collected materials.

CHAPTER I PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The schools that housed Chapter I E.S.L. programs faced multiple challenges, such as illiteracy in the native language, an influx of immigrants with few years of prior education, large classes, and the frequent need to group students with diverse native languages in the same E.S.L. class. Each school dealt with its problems in its own way, therefore, the Chapter I E.S.L. program was not the same at every site.

Eastern District High School

Eastern District High School emphasized their literacy program. Twenty-five to 30 percent of its students were illiterate in their native language. Chapter I funded an E.S.L. literacy class at the "0" level, which students usually took for one semester. The curriculum of the E.S.L. literacy class was paired with a native language literacy class.

The school plans to inaugurate a dual literacy program which will give students a double period of E.S.L. and a double period of Spanish language literacy each day. The foreign language assistant principal said that students would probably remain in this program for one or two years before entering regular Native Language Arts (N.L.A.) and E.S.L. classes. He hoped that future classes would be significantly reduced from the current levels of 27 students in most funded E.S.L. classes and 45 students in many N.L.A. classes.

The school had a Chapter I-funded guidance counselor and paraprofessional. In addition to advising students, the guidance counselor and paraprofessional provided outreach services to parents.

John F. Kennedy High School

At John F. Kennedy High School, the E.S.L. coordinator believed that problems with literacy and general academic preparedness were worsening. The immigrant populations at Kennedy came primarily from the Dominican Republic and other Spanish-speaking countries, as well as from Korea and China. The

coordinator was of the opinion that newly-immigrated students from the Dominican Republic, Korea, and China had fewer years of education than earlier groups from these countries.

The foreign language assistant principal and the E.S.L. coordinator agreed that the educational characteristics of the recently arrived LEP students called for innovative high school programs that addressed social and economic as well as academic needs. They noted the enormous difficulty over-age students had in completing high school. These students had to spend extra semesters or years learning a new language, becoming oriented to a new culture, and adjusting to new curricula. The assistant principal and coordinator suggested an alternative school setting for these students, one in which there is no stigma attached to being over-age for grade. They recommended a setting which would group students of different ages and grades together. They also recommended the initiation of cooperative programs for students to get work experience and earn money while accumulating high school credits.

Martin Luther King, Jr., High School

The Chapter I E.S.L. program at Martin Luther King, Jr., High School offered bilingual (Spanish) content area courses as well as those taught in English using E.S.L. methodology. The program automatically placed Spanish-speaking LEP students in the bilingual program. They could elect to leave it to join the English language/E.S.L. methodology content area courses, but most chose to remain in the bilingual courses. Teachers

presented bilingual content area courses at a more advanced level than they did the E.S.L. courses, so students sometimes enjoyed the former more. Staff reported, however, that students in the E.S.L. subject area classes tended to learn English faster, thus hastening their progress toward the mainstream.

Edward R. Murrow High School

Edward R. Murrow High School had relatively few students who were illiterate in their native language. The school offered a bilingual cluster program in business education as well as in academic subjects for Spanish-speaking LEP students. A mentor program taught subject area teachers E.S.L. methodology so they might better serve LEP students in mainstream classes.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chapter I E.S.L. regulations governing program models for different types of high schools were geared to providing students with an acceptable level of English proficiency by the end of a typical high school program. Schools used Chapter I funds for E.S.L. to supplement tax-levy classes.

Many of these schools were beset with a multitude of problems, such as native language illiteracy, meager education prior to immigration, social and economic difficulties facing the newly-arrived students, and large class size. In some cases, the constant influx of new students made it impossible to group students functionally in their E.S.L. classes, so students at diverse levels of English proficiency were often in the same E.S.L. class.

Problems faced by one site were not the same as those faced by another. Each school sought to best serve its students given the conditions it faced and budgetary restraints. It is anticipated that such problems will intensify since schools are now mandated to provide E.S.L. services to students scoring between the twenty-first and fortieth percentiles on the LAB, not, as heretofore, below the twenty-first only.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Examine the effects of the new LEP eligibility rules on the demand for Chapter I funds to supplement tax-levy monies for E.S.L.

- Evaluate the effects of class size on E.S.L. learning and consider reducing class size if the study indicates that this would be prudent.

- Explore effectiveness of program model as it relates to student acquisition of English language skills and time needed to mainstream.